

### 15. CROWS FEEDING ON THE SEEDS OF *ALBIZIA LEBBECK* AND THE EXOTIC *ACACIA MELANOXYLON*

On 9 March 1990, in the Forest Rest House premises at Pt. Calimere, Tamil Nadu, we saw many house crows *Corvus splendens* Vieillot and a few jungle crows *Corvus macrorhynchos* Wagler feeding on the seeds of *Acacia melanoxylon*. During March, the pods of *Acacia melanoxylon* break open, exposing the seeds which are attached to the pods by the arils. A large number of crows were seen actively feeding on the seeds. We also saw a few golden orioles *Oriolus oriolus* feeding on these seeds. *A. melanoxylon* is an exotic introduced from Australia.

In another incident on 11 March 1990, at Thoppururai (13 km from Pt. Calimere), many jungle crows and a few house crows were observed feeding

on the seeds of *Albizia lebeck*. The crow would clutch a plucked dry pod with its feet, break open the pod and eat only one or two seeds. The pod with the remaining seeds was discarded. The crows were seen to feed on these seeds for many days, as long as the pods were available. A few threestriped palm squirrels *Funambulus palmarum* were also noticed feeding on the seeds.

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June 15, 1991

### 16. FOOD-STORING BEHAVIOUR OF THE JUNGLE CROW *CORVUS MACRORHYNCHOS* WAGLER

On 3 September 1988 at the Forest Rest House at Pt. Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu, I saw a jungle crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* flying with a piece of fish in its bill. Later, the crow placed the fish on the ground and then covered it with leaves of *Thespesia populnea* and flew away. I noticed similar storage behaviour of this crow on many occasions during the fishing season, when a lot of fish waste is available. Food storage during abundance of food is reported in crested tit *Parus cristatus*

(Haftorn 1953), acorn woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* (Bent 1939), jays *Garrulus glandarius* (Chettleburgh 1952), ravens *Corvus corax* (Gwinner 1965), nut cracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes* (Swanberg 1951). Food storing behaviour of the jungle crow is worth mentioning as it has not been reported earlier.

June 20, 1991

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### 17. SIGHTING OF WHITEBELLIED MINIVET *PERICROCOTUS ERYTHROPYGIUS* (JERDON) AT BANDIPUR

While watching birds at the Bandipur Tiger Reserve on the morning of 22 August 1987 a pair of whitebellied minivets *Pericrocotus erythropygus*

(Jerdon) were seen. The birds were in an open patch with a few scattered bushes very close to a waterhole east of the reception centre. The birds were first

spotted while they were perching on a dry bush about 60 cm from the ground and later flew to a nearby tree. Subsequently on the morning of 23 August 1987 a pair of this species was seen in the same area.

The whitebellied minivet is known to occur south up to Belgaum and also the base of the Nilgiris (HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN,

Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D. 1987). Salim Ali during his 'Birds of Mysore' survey (1939) did not come across this species. The present sighting is the southernmost for Karnataka and probably also the first report of this species between Belgaum and the Nilgiris.

March 13, 1991

S. KARTHIKEYAN

#### 18. SPOTTED LONGTAILED WREN-BABBLER *SPELAEORNIS TROGLODYTOIDES* (VERREAUX) IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

According to the HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN (Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D. 1983) the spotted longtailed on when-babbler is rare resident and has been recorded only in eastern Bhutan. I sighted on 27 April 1991 more than four of the above birds in a mixed party of brownheaded tit-babbler *Alcippea cinereiceps* and yellowbacked sunbird *Aethopy nipalensis*. This sighting was done in a scrub/rhododendron forest at an altitude of 2800 m at 0930 hrs near Chaku in Eagle Nest Wild-life

Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh. It is along an elephant track to the nearby hill peak (2940 m altitude) and about 5 km north of Chaku, the grid reference being 825392 (Toposheet 83 A/8).

Eagle Nest Sanctuary falls in west Arunachal Pradesh in West Kameng district. The area is very close to East Bhutan where the bird has been recorded.

July 7, 1991

PRATAP SINGH

#### 19. LEAPFROGGING IN COMMON BABBLERS *TURDOIDES CAUDATUS CAUDATUS* (DUMONT)

The general habits of common babblers have been described in 'HAND BOOK OF BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN' (Ali S. and Ripley S.D. 1983) as, the species keep in flocks of six to twenty individuals sometimes even in the breeding season, spending its time on the ground, hopping about rapidly with a bouncing gait, more commonly and scuttling like a rat under the sparse vegetation and hedges.

On 8 May 1990, around 1730 hrs a flock of eight birds was noticed indulging in a typical behaviour termed as 'leapfrogging'. A flock appeared on a parapet wall and started probing for insects.

Movement of the flock was accomplished by the rear bird jumping forward, over the next bird, and landing about 15-25 cm ahead and so on. This way the flock traversed a distance of about 6.5 m on the wall and another 5 m on the next wall, pausing intermittently to probe for insects and feeding thereon.

Leapfrogging in cattle egrets has been recorded (*JBNHS* 83 (2): 432, Paul Newton) but its adoption by common babblers has not been mentioned in the available literature.

July 9, 1991

A.M.K. BHAROS

#### 20. KASHMIR REDBREASTED FLYCATCHER *MUSCICAPA SUBRUBRA* HARTERT AND STEINBACHER AT OOTY

While watching birds at the edge of a *shola* close to Radio Astronomy Centre, Ooty<sup>1</sup>, on 11 December 1990 one of us (SK) spotted a flycatcher very similar in habits to the redbreasted flycatcher *Muscicapa parva* but with extensive red on the breast

edged with black.

The bird was sighted in a wattle plantation bordering the *shola* and it never flew above one and a half metres from the ground. Using the HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN (Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D. 1987, 2nd Compact ed.) the bird was later identified as the Kashmir redbreasted flycatcher *Muscicapa subrubra* Hartert and Steinbacher. The

<sup>1</sup>For earlier record from Ooty, see S.C. Harrap & N.J. Redmann, 1989, *JBNHS* 86(3): 460-61—Editors.